

Message Text

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62/21

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-06 SAB-01 SCS-03 TRSE-00 PM-04 PA-01

PRS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 AF-08 /035 W

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O 291940Z APR 76 CORRECTED COPY FOR MCN

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7577

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: GOP REQUEST FOR SEIZURE OF US FLAG VESSEL

REF: PANAMA 2944

1. MORNING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE "STAR AND HERALD" AND SISTER SPANISH-LANGUAGE "ESTRELLA" FOR APRIL 29 CARRY AP STORY QUOTING ED SILVA, SPOKESMAN FOR AMERICAN TUNA BOAT ASSOCIATION, DEALING WITH CURRENT SITUATION. EMBASSY HAS CHECKED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THIS STORY WITH BOAT AGENTS AND PANCANAL, PRODUCING FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

2. REGARDING ALLEGED FIRING ON "BOLD PROVIDER" BY PANAMANIAN AIR FORCE PLANE, "BOLD PROVIDER" IS NOT IN CANAL ZONE WATERS AS OF EARLY MORNING APRIL 29, AND PANCANAL HAD RECEIVED NO NOTICE TO THAT TIME THAT SHE PLANNED TO ARRIVE. THIS BOAT'S AGENT WAS AWARE OF STORY THAT SHE HAD BEEN FIRED UPON ONLY FROM BOAT'S OWNER IN U.S., AND AGENT DOES NOT KNOW WHERE OWNER PICKED UP STORY. AGENT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY MESSAGES OR HAD ANY DIRECT CONTACT WITH "BOLD PROVIDER" FROM PANAMA AND KNOWS NOTHING MORE OF THIS ALLEGED INCIDENT.

3. "VOYAGER", AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, TRANSITED CANAL

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NIGHT OF APRIL 28-29 AND IS NOW ANCHORED AT CRISTOBAL.

AGENT STATES OWNER'S INSTRUCTIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED, I.E., THAT BOAT IS TO REMAIN AT CRISTOBAL PENDING FURTHER ADVICE FROM OWNER.

4. REGARDING THIRD VESSEL NAMED BY SILVA, THE "KALI", AGENT REPORTS THAT SHE WAS IN SIGHT OF "VOYAGER" ON SUNDAY, APRIL 25 OFF MONTUOSA ISLAND. "KALI" LOG, ACCORDING TO AGENT, SHOWS LAST FISH TAKEN IN COSTA RICAN WATERS, AND THAT SHE HAD SAILED TO THIS AREA TO CLEAN NETS EN ROUTE TO BALBOA FOR CANAL TRANSIT. LOG RECORDS SIGHTING OF AIRCRAFT NEAR "VOYAGER" WHILE LATTER WAS ALSO CLEANING NETS. "KALI" COMPLETED NET CLEANING AND, AFTER EXPERIENCING SOME ENGINE TROUBLE THAT EVENING, PROCEEDED TO BALBOA. "KALI" COMMENCED TRANSIT OF CANAL AT ABOUT 1000 THURSDAY, APRIL 29.

5. AGENT STATED THAT "KALI" NAME IS NOT NEARLY SO PROMINENTLY PAINTED ON BOAT AS IS CUSTOM ON MANY OTHER BOATS, AND SPECULATED THAT REASON GOP DID NOT NAME IT ALONG WITH "VOYAGER" MIGHT HAVE BEEN THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY IT. FYI: AGENT WAS SOMEWHAT UPSET THAT TUNA BOAT ASSOCIATION HAD IN ITS PRESS STATEMENT IDENTIFIED "KALI" FOR PANAMANIAN, AND IS PROCEEDING ON WORKING ASSUMPTION THAT "KALI" AND "VOYAGER" ARE THE TWO BOATS REFERRED TO BY GOP PER BECKER-HINSON TELECON 4/29. WHILE GOP HAS NOT YET NAMED "KALI" TO EMBASSY, OR MADE ANY OFFICIAL REFERENCE HERE AS YET TO A SECOND BOAT, EMBASSY CONSIDERS AGENT'S ASSUMPTION REASONABLE. END FYI.

6. UPON BEING ADVISED (PER BECKER-HINSON TELECON) THAT GOP HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN TWO BOATS, AGENT FOR "KALI" STATED THAT HE WAS GOING TO HOLD "KALI" AT CRISTOBAL AFTER COMPLETING CANAL TRANSIT, AND THAT HE WOULD CONSULT WITH OWNERS OF BOAT, WHO HE WAS SURE WOULD CONCUR AND DIRECT THAT "KALI" REMAIN THERE PENDING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

7. "KALI" AGENT HAS SAID HE WILL PROVIDE EMBASSY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFORMALLY WITH COPIES OF SHIP'S LOG EXTRACTS FOR OUR INFORMATION.

8. AMBASSADOR IS NOW SEEKING URGENT APPOINTMENT WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS TO DISCUSS THIS SITUATION.

JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: PN, SHIP DETENTION, PRESS COMMENTS, PFOR, PQ, FISHING BOATS, VOYAGER FV, BOLD PROVIDER, KALI
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Draft Date: 29 APR 1976
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